

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CI, SHUM, CASC (O'FLAHERTY, AMY CONGER)

SUBJECT: WILLIAM BUCKLEY ARTICLE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY ARTICLE
TITLED "ASSESSING TORTURE CLAIMS" WHICH APPEARED IN
WASHINGTON STAR NEWS DECEMBER 24.

2. QUOTE: THOSE WHO DESPISE TORTURE AS MUCH AS WE ALL
SHOULD OUGHT TO RESENT IT WHEN CHARGES OF TORTURE ARE
USED FOR THE SAKE OF ADVANCING A POLITICAL MOVEMENT. I
HAVE IN MIND, FOR INSTANCE, THE RECENT NOTORIETY GIVEN TO
THE CASE OF MISS AMY CONGER, ALSO KNOWN AS MRS. O'FLAHERTY,
ALSO SUSPECTED, BY CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE, OF BEING MATA
HARI.

BUT FIRST TO WHAT ALLEGEDLY HAPPENED TO MISS CONGER WHEN
SHE WAS ARRESTED IN MID-OCTOBER BY THE CHILEANS IN
SANTIAGO WHERE SHE HAD BEEN TEACHING ENGLISH. HERE IS HOW
(ONLY) JACK ANDERSON (COULD HAVE) PUT IT: "THE YOUNG
UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR WAS THREATENED WITH DEATH, FORCED
TO RIDE WITH BREASTS BARED THROUGH THE STREETS AND THROWN
ON A BED WHERE SHE WAS MENACED WITH RAPE. SHE WAS SUB-
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JECTED TO OBSCENE QUESTIONING, CATAPULTED DOWN STAIRS WHILE

BLINDFOLDED, DEPRIVED OF WATER, DENIED SLEEP AND FORCED TO STAND UNTIL SHE ALMOST COLLAPSED;" THAT AND QUITE A BIT

MORE.

NOW THIS REPORT OF ANDERSON'S JOLTED THE COUNTRY -- QUITE NATURALLY SO -- AND PROBABLY HAD A DIRECT BEARING ON THE VOTE IN THE CONGRESS DENYING SCHEDULED AID OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER TO THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. THIS COLUMN IS NOT A GENERAL DEFENSE OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT, MERELY AN INQUIRY INTO THESE ALLEGATIONS.

I REACHED THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL IN SANTIAGO WHO EXTRICATED MISS CONGER FROM THE CHILEAN AUTHORITIES AND ASKED HIM WHETHER SHE HAD COMPLAINED OF BEING TORTURED. HE ANSWERED NO. SHE HAD COMPLAINED, HE SAID, OF BEING DETAINED IN THE FIRST PLACE, OF BEING HANDCUFFED, OF BEING BLINDFOLDED AND OF NOT HAVING BEEN PERMITTED TO CALL THE CONSUL. I ASKED WHETHER IT WAS FAIR TO SAY THAT "THE AMERICAN CONSULATE DENIES THAT MISS CONGER COMPLAINED OF THE SADISTIC TREATMENT DESCRIBED IN MR. JACK ANDERSON'S COLUMN." HE REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

MEANWHILE, THE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON WROTE BOTH TO JACK ANDERSON AND TO THE WASHINGTON POST. IF THE AMBASSADOR IS TO BE BELIEVED -- AND HE INVITES INDEPENDENT CORROBORATION OF THE MATTER -- MISS CONGER HAD BEEN BEHAVING IN A MOST UNLAWFUL WAY WHILE IN CHILE. SHE WAS, THOUGH RATHER INFORMALLY, MARRIED TO AN ARGENTINIAN REVOLUTIONARY. IN CHILE, SHE MOVED FROM RESIDENCE TO RESIDENCE, APPARENTLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING SAFE HOUSES FOR YOUNG MILITANT MIRISTAS, MEMBERS OF A TERRORIST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY -- OR, IF YOU PREFER, COUNTER-COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY -- OUTFIT.

AS FOR THE CONDITION OF THE JAILS -- AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE ALLEGED ACTS OF TORTURE -- THEY ARE CONCEDEDLY DEPLORABLE. THE CIVIL ATTACHE OF THE CHILEAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WROTE TO ANDERSON THAT "OUR JAILS ARE OUTDATED, WITH ALMOST ALL OF THEM DATING TO AS FAR BACK AS UNCLASSIFIED

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1891, AND THE CURRENT CHILEAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO BUILD ANY SPECIAL JAILS FOR THE EXCLUSIVE PURPOSE OF KEEPING POLITICAL PRISONERS, AS IS THE CASE IN CUBA, THE SOVIET UNION OR OTHER COUNTRIES. I KNOW THE CHILEAN JAILS RATHER WELL, AND I SHOULD, SINCE I WAS ARRESTED 28 TIMES DURING SALVADOR ALLENDE'S ADMINISTRATION, ON ACCOUNT OF MY ACTIVITIES AS A JOURNALIST.

THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF TUQUOQUE THERE, BUT I GUESS IF YOU

OR I HAD WRITTEN THE LETTER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT
TO RESIST.

BUT TOMAKE THE POINT FINALLY: TORTURE IS ITSELF
CALLOUSING. IN BRAZIL, WHERE THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT
TORTURE IS WIDESPREAD, IT IS ALSO PROBABLY TRUE THAT MUCH
OF IT IS LOCALLY INSPIRED -- A KIND OF BLACK-MARKET
TORTURE, DISAPPROVED BY CENTRAL REGULATION. BY THE SAME
TOKEN, IT IS CALLOUSING TO READ ABOUT TORTURE WHILE NEVER
QUITE KNOWING WHETHER THE ACCOUNTS OF IT ARE A) ACCURATE;
OR B) FICTITIOUS, AND POLITICALLY-INSPIRED. THOSE WHO
GIVE CURRENCY TO ACCOUNTS OF TORTURE OF THIS KIND ARE
FRIENDS NOT OF THE TORTURED, BUT OF THE TORTURERS. MAW

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